

Amendments To The Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims:

Claims 1-20 (canceled).

21. (Original) A programmable conductor random access memory intermediate structure, comprising:

- a substrate;
- a first conductor formed on said substrate;
- an insulator formed on said first conductor, at least one via formed within said insulator and extending to said first conductor;
- a metallic material formed in said at least one via; and
- a hard mask formed on said metallic material within said at least one via.

22. (Original) The programmable conductor random access memory intermediate structure of claim 21, wherein said metallic material comprises silver.

23. (Currently amended) The programmable conductor random access memory intermediate structure of claim 21, wherein said ~~flowable oxide~~ hard mask comprises silicon oxide.

24. (Original) The programmable conductor random access memory intermediate structure of claim 21, wherein said metallic material is deposited on a surface of said insulator.

25. (New) A programmable conductor random access memory intermediate structure, comprising:

a metallic material formed on a surface of an insulating layer and within and over a bottom of a via in said insulating layer;

a hard mask formed over said metallic material in said via.

26. (New) The programmable conductor random access memory intermediate structure of claim 25, wherein said metallic material comprises silver.

27. (New) The programmable conductor random access memory intermediate structure of claim 25, wherein said hard mask comprises a flowable oxide.

28. (New) The programmable conductor random access memory intermediate structure of claim 27, wherein said flowable oxide comprises silicon oxide.

29. (New) The programmable conductor random access memory intermediate structure of claim 28, wherein said silicon oxide is in a flowable form in a temperature range of 50° C to 90° C.